

Message Text

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73

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 SAJ-01 /078 W
----- 051508

R 271606Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9150

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 1199

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CH, UR

SUBJ: SOVIETS RELEASE SOME CHINESE: RUMOR AND DENIAL

1. PAKISTANI DCM KHAN TOLD SEVERAL DIPLOMATS LAST WEEK THAT HE HAD "HEARD" THAT THE SOVIETS RESPONDED TO THE CHINESE RELEASE OF THE HELICOPTER CREW BY RELEASING FOUR CHINESE, PRESUMABLY SOLDIERS, WHO WERE BEING HELD IN THE SOVIET FAR EAST. IN A LATER CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, KHAN SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THAT TWO OTHER CHINESE HAD BEEN RELEASED AFTER THE INITIAL FOUR. KHAN WOULD NOT IDENTIFY HIS SOURCE, BUT SAID THE STORY WAS PASSED TO HIM AS SOMETHING WHICH "EVERYONE KNEW." HE INTERPRETED THE MOVE AS A SOVIET GESTURE OF STRICT RECIPROCITY FOR PEKING'S RELEASE, BUT HE WOULD NOT VOUCH FOR THE RELIABILITY OF HIS SOURCE.

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2. SOVIET MFA CHINA DESK OFFICER KIREYEV TOLD EMBOFF

ON JANUARY 23 THAT THE STORY WAS UNFOUNDED. HE SAID THAT HE KNEW OF NO SUCH SOVIET RELEASE RECENTLY.

3. COMMENT. SINCE WE DO NOT KNOW THE SOURCE OF THE ORIGINAL STORY, WE CANNOT COMMENT ON ITS LIKELY VERACITY, BUT THE SETTING IN WHICH IT WAS PASSED SHOULD GUARANTEE THAT IT WILL SURFACE IN DIPLOMATIC AND PERHAPS PRESS REPORTING. SUCH A MOVE BY MOSCOW WOULD NOT BE IMPLAUSIBLE, BUT FOR IT TO BE A RECIPROCAL GESTURE THE SOVIETS WOULD, OF COURSE, HAVE TO PUBLICIZE IT.
STOESSEL

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRISONERS RELEASE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976MOSCOW01199
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760031-0317
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760118/aaaaapkd.tel
Line Count: 72
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 APR 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <12 AUG 2004 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOVIETS RELEASE SOME CHINESE: RUMOR AND DENIAL
TAGS: PFOR, CH, UR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006